HEARING STATEMENT – MAIN MATTER 2

Chesterfield Local Plan Examination

September 2019
Prepared for: Strategic Development Land Ltd

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING | LEEDS
Main Matter 2 – Land to the south east of Calow Lane, Hasland

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1. **Introduction**

1.1 This Hearing Statement is submitted by Cushman & Wakefield on behalf of Strategic Development Land Ltd to the Chesterfield Local Plan and relates to Main Matter 2.

1.2 Strategic Development Land have land and property interests at Calow Lane, Hasland. Cushman & Wakefield have previously made representations towards the emerging Local Plan in support of the application site.

1.3 Strategic Development Land consider that the plan as submitted is not sound and this Hearing Statement seeks to assist the Inspector by specifically addressing a number of issues raised by the Inspector.

1.4 By way of background the site at Calow Lane, Hasland is approximately 7ha and comprises four agricultural fields. An outline planning application was submitted for up to 120 dwellings with all matters reserved except for access (ref: CHE/19/00251/OUT). The application is still waiting to be determined, with a deadline of 15 October 2019. Cushman & Wakefield are currently in discussions with the case officer regarding the proposal.

1.5 The site lies outside of, but adjacent to the settlement development limits of Hasland and is designated as ‘Development in the Open Countryside & Other Open Land’ in the adopted Chesterfield Local Plan. The site has not been allocated in this emerging Local Plan.
2. **Main Matter 2 – Securing a sustainable pattern of development**

**Issue 1: Is the spatial strategy sound? [Policies LP1, LP2 & LP3]**

**2.1 Are the 13 strategic objectives in the Plan soundly based and reflective of the key issues facing the Borough including those identified through the sustainability appraisal scoping and baseline work?**

The 13 Strategic Objectives of the emerging Local Plan are reflective of the key issues facing the Borough. The Strategic Objectives and key aspirations of the local plan recognise the need for housing delivery in Chesterfield through the provision of a necessary quantum of housing, and through the allocation of strategic residential development sites. The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) notes that there is room for uncertainties as potential conflicts could arise between growth, resource use and environmental factors. Where possible incompatibilities have been identified, tensions between the objectives can be resolved if development takes place in accordance with all of the Local Plan objectives. As such an incompatibility does not necessarily mean an insurmountable issue but one that may need to be considered in the development of Local Plan policies.

We would agree that in general the strategic objectives of the Plan are soundly based to reflect the key issues facing the Borough. We support the inclusion of the objective on health given the health and well-being in the Borough identified by the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

**2.2 Is the proposed spatial strategy to ‘concentrate’ new development within walking distance of centres and ‘regenerate’ key locations and sites an appropriate strategy for the Borough? Will it ensure delivery of homes and jobs in the short-term as well as setting appropriate foundations for the pattern of development in the longer term?**

The core element of the policies is to locate new homes and jobs as far as possible within settlements and which are well related to key public transport corridors, ensuring residents have access to public transport, shops, services and facilities both within their immediate area and across the wider District. The SA preferred option is to concentrate and regenerate areas through new development, whilst the strategy has potential to deliver a significant amount of housing. There is no guarantee that these sites will be deliverable within the Plan period and therefore this may prejudice the delivery of sufficient homes and jobs over the plan period.

**2.3 Are the regeneration priority areas identified in Policy LP1 justified and is it an appropriate spatial strategy (at a strategy level) to seek to accommodate appreciable levels of growth at these locations to “maximise regeneration benefits” (see also questions under Matter 1 under to Duty to Cooperate and Matter 5 on Policy RP1 for the Regeneration Areas).**

As a general point we consider it an appropriate strategy that the areas identified in Policy LP1 are key regeneration areas. These locations should maximise regeneration benefits, however the policy should be extended to include other sustainable locations in the Borough such as Hasland to ensure that the Borough is able to achieve its housing and economic growth objectives, should the regeneration of these areas stall. In any event we consider that development can come forward in both regeneration areas and other sustainable areas of the Borough at the same time throughout the plan period, without prejudice of each other.
2.4 **Is the expectation in Policy LP2 (Location of Development) that new residential development (both allocations and windfalls) will be within walking distance (800 metres) of local, district or town centres a sound approach? Is 800 metres a justified threshold? Is most of the existing built-up area and immediate fringes of Chesterfield, Brimington and Staveley within the 800 metre threshold?**

Policy LP2 does not take into account that distances over 800 metres may be within a reasonable walking distance and some distance of less than 800 metres may not be a reasonable walking distance as sites are likely to be affected by location, topography, weather, pedestrian facilities, trip purpose and cultural factors. There are other considerations such as lighting, safety and provision of footpaths which may influence whether 800 metres is a ‘reasonable’ walking distance.

We consider that stipulating a distance of 800 metres in the policy to be too restrictive. The Council has based this distance on the guidance contained in the Institution of Highways and Transportation Providing for Journeys on Foot (2000). Table 3.2 within the document contains suggested acceptable walking distance, where the preferred maximum walking distance to town centres is 800 metres, however, their table also sets a preferred maximum distance for commuting/school, sight-seeing at 2,000 metres. These distances are only guidelines and it is clear that other factors also influence what may be considered an acceptable walking distance. At paragraph 3.30 of the document it advises that research has shown that in urban areas the average length of a walking journey is 1km (ie longer than the proposed distance) therefore stipulating in a policy a prescriptive distance fails to take account of the quantifiable environment, which is equally important.

For example, if someone is prepared to walk 800 metres to local shops etc., they are likely to be prepared to walk a few more metres subject to an appropriate topography and facilities. People are less likely to walk 800m where the route is at an incline/decline for the majority of the route, even where this may be less than 800m and where there are no pedestrian footpaths.

Regardless of the distance it is up to each individual whether they choose to walk or not, 800 metres as set out is just a proposed guideline, this should be reflected in the wording of the policy, such that this reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

2.5 **Is Policy LP3 (presumption in favour of sustainable development) necessary for plan soundness? Does it add to what it in the NPPF and does its inclusion reflect the guidance at PPG paragraph 61-036-20190723?**

Policy LP3 seeks to integrate the Frameworks presumption in favour of sustainable development into local planning policy. The policy simply reiterates the national planning policy and as such is not considered necessary for the plans soundness. The Planning Practice Guidance paragraph 036 indicates that Local Plan should reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This should be done by identifying how the presumption will be applied locally. However, there is no need for a plan to directly replicate the wording in paragraph 11 in a policy.

Whilst the policy does not add anything to paragraph 11, sets out how the council will seek to integrate the presumption in favour of sustainable development as a critical component in the ethos of the Local Plan’s strategy and provides a basis for proposals to be approved without delay. The application of this policy in light of the proposed allocations and published housing trajectory should however be taken into account. Its inclusion is considered to reflect the guidance in the PPG.
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